

4/13/72

Dear Phil (cc Gary),

We seem to live from one unnecessary problem to another and to be the victims of the kind of medical practise each of you described in similar terms at the time of my blackout. It now turns out that at the very best our medical co-op has inadequate records, inexcusable when they knew our records would be involved in litigation, or has purged them, and the opinion of the lawyer I have finally gotten who has been given something, I do not know what, is that they can be used against us. I have no way of knowing what they show, but I have a sufficient clue in what is absent and what is included. Absent is the psychiatric urging to move my wife from the farm because of the helicopter associations and her extraordinary reaction to the mere typing of scientific data on noise (diagnosed originally as a stroke—she collapsed in the clinic, could not walk, when she shuffled had to be aided and directed). Present is that we both have mild to moderate, direct quotes, anxiety. My wife has never been told this or had it discussed with her and it was discussed with me only when I learned it after the second attack of hyperventilation, here, 50 miles from our co-op, with such shallowness and futility that I had to learn from the two of you, as you may recall, what i was and how one can attempt to cope with it.

from Perhaps ~~for~~ the indices available to you you may be able to locate the shrink who told me it was urgent to move my wife and after an hour with her told her the same thing. At this point I have to prepare for court and had best not depend on the bastards to whom we pay some \$750 a year for not keeping records. His name is Casey. He was with the Army. When we consulted him he was with the Group Health Association in DC, and I heard that when he left there he headed some school of psych. in the south. He just may remember.

I met a local shrink who seems to be both decent and dedicated when a former patient came to me for literary assistance. She is a bad case, a tragic one. So, I asked him if he could recommend anyone in his field who might have the professional and the forensic qualifications to be of same help to us in this extremity. He yesterday suggested ~~at~~ Dr. Groh, a former classmate, in DC (106 Irving, NW), who is also a neurologist, and today he told me of a Dr. Jonas Rapaport, in Baltimore, who he describes as a forensic psych. and according to his source, interested in the kind of case we can present. Can either of you get any kind of rundown on either or both? I see Groh 5/5. It would be good to get an opinion if one is available and without embarrassment. My own experience, limited as it has been, is that all except this local guy seem to have specialized to avoid paying fees in the field. My one psych. consultation at GHA was exactly the futility a decent GP told me it would be when he counselled against seeking it. He left, and when they had a shrink call me back when they were so without interest when I blacked out, I wondered if this meant they felt I needed one, so I saw a guy who told me not to try to stop smoking and asked me if I wanted deep therapy. I don't yet know what that is. I presume he put black marks down on the records when I said I didn't practise medicine, that I was the patient. So, with the real disaster I have never discussed with either of you that this matter of the helicopters brought into and made of our lives, I find now a new one, no medical records!

From now on it, despite the enormous investment we have in GHA having been members since about 1938 (we are among its oldest members), I think it would be prudent to expect little of them and to anticipate that if anyone really went over the records they may have thought a sharp lawyer might spot a malpractice case (never in MY mind) and purged the records accordingly. I wonder how many of their patients they do not tell they have broken legs, or how they expect anxiety patients to cope with it not knowing they have it? Or even at any time explaining it? My experience is that what can be comprehended, can be accepted, ceases being a problem unless it must be. For example, once I got a logical and credible explanation of that blackout, it has been no sweat. So, I'm going to ask for a consultation with the doctor I see, but expecting little or nothing, while I'm writing, perhaps you, who have helped in the past when they have not, can again.

I realize one can't with certainty analyze himself nor can he be certain of recollection. However, I can't really think of any real anxiety problems not seemingly related in some way with the helicopter-smic boom business leading to this spit. The two attacks of hyperventilation I can relate to nothing. Both came upon me when there was no apparent reason. Each time we had company, not unwelcome, each time was a nice summer day, etc.

I find that I believe there began an increase in the manifestation of the symptoms when it became certain that the government was playing legal games with me, stalling the case and in a manner calculated to prejudice the judge. When the doublecross became open, it got rough. Since then, I feel a reaction every time any aspect comes to mind. Perhaps there is also a correlation with the multitudinous other problems with which we live, but I can't make any. Gary has seen me under stress and should remember I surely showed no such signs. I did about 18 hours of radio ad lib in his presence, with TV shows at each meal break, and it was no sweat and I was able to fall asleep fairly promptly after it was all over and it began by my having missed a plane and being late. Surely, if a layman can understand a chronic condition, one that reacts to everything, that was one to which I should have reacted. He will recall that the noon after the long day I made a speech knowing there were some kinds of agents in the audience, that it went well, etc. He has seen me under stress in H.O. and knows some of the things I have done there susceptible of misinterpretation as a tendency toward self-destruction but all had a "professional" purpose. Like spending two weeks in the home of a man confined for the security of the President and who had escaped an institution, armed, for the purpose of killing Garrison. Best accommodations I ever had, with most privacy, most conducive to work, and probably the most productive time I spent there. I walked Decatur alone at night, went to La Casa despite its rep and mine known (as a matter of fact, wearing sandals, short and an "I've been touched by the Jolly Green Giant" sweatshirt because that is what I had been wearing). None of this ever bothered me. I have kept killing schedules without reaction. We live from one financial crisis to another, but no special sweat, perhaps because I expect them all to work out, somehow. (Year behind in principal payments.) But to this one thing I am conscious, and now more conscious, of reaction. I became certain of it after the lawyer came here several months ago. Each time I have turned to work on the case I reacted. I worked on info he needs for the government (which asked for it as harassment, already havin' it) until it was time to go for my wife, who was working temporarily (ends next week), and as soon as I started to drive I realized I should not be. Dry yawns, etc. It lingered several days. Writing him to explain the delay, similar reaction. Answering the letter I got from him yesterday, ditto. Although until this got active I was skipping most of the valium, I had to take a second at midday today. With the mine, a glass of which I have with lunch and with supper, I've cooled and feel okay. But even the thought of having to address that miserable stuff is repugnant now, not a challenge from which I can take hope, and it is the one thing to which I am certain to react. Memory can be tricky, but I don't remember any other thing where there has been the certainty. Gary knows that I've had my share of problems, but never until this did I ever take the ~~third~~ Valium 5 in a single day. In fact, with all of this, I've never had insomnia. The only time I can recall is about Thanksgiving, when I was in Dallas and the weather reports for home were 12 inches of snow and my wife was alone and isolated.

Anyway, two valium 5s now are not enough some days. I take it this is a fairly mild dosage. So, I'll be asking the doctor if he'd recommend more (I've never taken more than 3) or another drug or what. And, of course, there remains the question do I know need psych help, which I can't learn from them. In the event I get a neutral reaction, I can, as I did with the blackout, go back and ask how about this, which is the point I'm getting at. Any suggestions?

Time was when I boiled over easily. Only infrequently now, and then only with real provocation. But then, no anxiety reaction or feeling. Sometimes I just get mad, as I have with the county for darning the end of our lane and not making the promised repairs. But that leads to no anxious feeling. I'm just mad.

This is not to say that other things do not, from time to time, disturb me. Gary knows of some connected with my work. But they do not linger. I have been and remain quite aware of the problems to which they can lead, but they present no anxiety problem. It may be that when they first became apparent they did, and that I don't now remember. But I am certain that unlike this, it did not linger and that it followed all of this, this was a basis for that, in other words, to cause an anxiety problem for this has dominated our lives some 15 years now.

It is now even less possible for me to accept the kind of invitations you extended ~~me~~ before, not only because I can't pay the fare but because I simply must work to prepare for the litigation. I guess one of the things I really have in mind is diminishing the reaction to it so I can do it both better and with less discomfort.

Speaking of discomfort, there is a new thing that may be an emotional symptom to you. My heart seems to check out ok. But beginning some time after this business with the damage suit and the government lawyer's crookedness on it, intermittently at night when I go to bed I become aware of the beating of my heart. I don't remember that, except from exertion. When I raised this question with the doctor by phone, he prescribed butisol, of which I'd never heard and of which I know nothing. Last night I had this beating awareness, took nothing, and I suppose I was asleep in 5-10 minutes anyway. I was upset by this business with the lawyer's letter (mine, that is) and the non-existent medical records. I can understand that it is an optional reaction, for there was no exertion of any kind all day yesterday - for several days, for I've had a cold - nothing physical to account for it. But I'd feel better with some understanding.

Well, I've got to go for lit now. Don't feel rushed, don't feel any emergency, and don't be embarrassed to say you don't know what to say. But if you have any suggestions or recommendations that might help, they'd be welcome. Best to you all.

Sincerely,

GRS: No word from "ed, in fact, from anyone, and nothing really new. If Frank appears out there, if you can have it taped, I'd appreciate it. That girl has disappeared. I wrote her at the Madison address she gave, it was forwarded to the Univ Chi. hospital, and was then returned to me in an envelope with the notation that she had left dead. Sounds paranoid, huh?